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Variety

William Whitehead



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V A R I E T Y.

A T A L E,

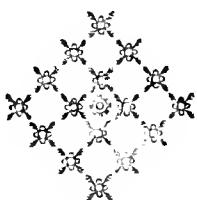
F O R

M A R R I E D P E O P L E.

NEC TECUM POSSUM VIVERE, NEC SINE TE.

MARTIAL.

I can't live with you, or without you.



L O N D O N :

Printed for J. DODSLEY, in Pall-mall,

M.DCC.LXXVI.



V A R I E T Y.

A T A L E.

A Gentle Maid, of rural breeding,
By Nature first, and then by reading,
Was fill'd with all those soft sensations
Which we restrain in near relations,
Lest future husbands should be jealous,
And think their wives too fond of fellows.

The morning sun beheld her rove
A Nymph, or Goddess of the grove !
At eve she pac'd the dewy lawn,
And call'd each clown she saw, a faun !
Then, scudding homeward, lock'd her door,
And turn'd some copious volume o'er.

A 2

For

602442
ENGLISH

For much she read ; and chiefly those
 Great Authors, who in verse, or prose,
 Or something betwixt both, unwind
 The secret springs which move the mind.
 These much she read ; and thought she knew
 The human heart's minutest clue ;
 Yet shrewd observers still declare,
 (To show how shrewd observers are)
 Tho' Plays, which breath'd heroic flame,
 And Novels, in profusion, came,
 Imported fresh and fresh from France,
 She only read the heart's Romance.

The World, no doubt, was well enough
 To smooth the manners of the rough ;
 Might please the giddy and the vain,
 Those tinsell'd slaves of Folly's train.
 But, for her part, the truest taste
 She found was in retirement plac'd,

Where,

Where, as in verse it sweetly flows,
 “ On every thorn instruction grows.”
 Not that she wish’d to “ be alone,”
 As some affected Prudes have done ;
 She knew it was decreed on high
 We should “ increase and multiply ;”
 And therefore, if kind Fate would grant
 Her fondest wish, her only want,
 A cottage with the man she lov’d
 Was what her gentle heart approv’d ;
 In some delightful solitude
 Where step profane might ne’er intrude ;
 But Hymen guard the sacred ground,
 And *virtuous* Cupids hover round.
 Not such as flutter on a fan
 Round Crete’s vile bull, or Leda’s swan,
 (Who scatter myrtles, scatter roses,
 And hold their fingers to their noses.)

But

But simp'ring, mild, and innocent
 As Angels on a monument.

Fate heard her pray'r : a Lover came,
 Who felt, like her, th' innoxious flame ;
 One who had trod, as well as she,
 The flow'ry paths of Poesy ;
 Had warm'd himself with Milton's heat,
 Could ev'ry line of Pope repeat,
 Or chaunt, in Shenstone's tender strains,
 “ The Lover's hopes,” “ the Lover's pains.”

Attentive to the Charmer's tongue,
 With *him* she thought no ev'ning long ;
 With *him* she saunter'd half the day ;
 And sometimes, in a laughing way,
 Ran o'er the Catalogue by rote
 Of who might marry, and who not.
 Consider, Sir, we're near relations---
 I hope so in our inclinations. —

In short, she look'd, she blush'd consent ;
 He grasp'd her hand, to church they went ;
 And ev'ry matron that was there,
 With tongue so voluble and supple,
 Said, for her part, she must declare
 She never saw a finer couple.

O Halcyon days ! 'Twas Nature's reign,
 'Twas Tempe's vale, and Enna's plain.
 The fields assum'd unusual bloom,
 And ev'ry zephyr breath'd perfume.
 The laughing Sun with genial beams
 Danc'd lightly on th' exulting streams ;
 And the pale Regent of the night
 In dewy softness shed delight.
 'Twas Transport not to be exprest ;
 'Twas Paradise ! — But mark the rest.

Two smiling Springs had wak'd the flow'rs
 That paint the meads, or fringe the bow'rs,

(Ye Lovers, lend your wond'ring ears,
 Who count by months, and not by years)
 Two smiling Springs had chaplets wove
 To crown their solitude, and Love :
 When lo, they find, they can't tell how,
 Their walks are not so pleasant now.
 The seasons sure were chang'd ; the place
 Had, some how, got a diff'rent face.
 Some blast had struck the chearful scene ;
 The lawns, the woods were not so green.
 The purling rill, which murmur'd by,
 And once was liquid harmony,
 Became a sluggish, reedy pool :
 The days grew hot, the ev'nings cool.
 The Moon with all the starry reign
 Were Melancholy's silent train.
 And then the tedious winter night—
 They could not read by candle light.

Full oft, unknowing why they did,
They call'd in adventitious aid.

A faithful, fav'rite Dog ('twas thus
With Tobit, and Telemachus)

Amus'd their steps; and for a while
They view'd his gambols with a smile.

The Kitten too was comical,
She play'd so oddly with her tail,
Or in the glass was pleas'd to find
Another cat, and peep'd behind.

A courteous neighbour at the door
Was deem'd intrusive noise no more.

For rural visits, now and then,
Are right, as men must live with men.

Then cousin Jenny, fresh from town,

A new recruit, a dear delight !
Made many a heavy hour go down,
At morn, at noon, at eve, at night :

Sure they could hear her jokes for ever,

She was so sprightly, and so clever !

Yet neighbours were not quite the thing ;

What joy, alas ! could converse bring

With awkward creatures, bred at home----

The Dog grew dull, or troublesome.

The Cat had spoil'd the Kitten's merit,

And, with her youth, had lost her spirit.

And jokes, repeated o'er and o'er,

Had quite exhausted Jenny's store.

—“ And then, my dear, I can't abide

“ This always faunt'ring side by side.” —

Enough, he cries ! the reason's plain.

For causes never rack your brain.

Our neighbours are like other folks,

Skip's playful tricks, and Jenny's jokes

Are still delightful, still would please

Were we, my dear, ourselves at ease.

Look round, with an impartial eye,
 On yonder fields, on yonder sky ;
 The azure cope, the flow'rs below,
 With all their wonted colours glow.
 The rill still murmurs ; and the moon
 Shines, as she did, a softer sun.
 No change has made the seasons fail,
 No comet brush'd us with his tail.
 The scene's the same, the same the weather—
WE LIVE, MY DEAR, TOO MUCH TOGETHER.

Agreed. — a rich old uncle dies,
 And added wealth the means supplies.
 With eager haste to Town they flew,
 Where all must please, for all was new.

But here, by strict poetic laws,
 Description claims it's proper pause.

The rosy Morn had rais'd her head
 From old Tithonus' saffron bed ;
 And embrio sunbeams from the East,
 Half chok'd, were struggling thro' the mist,
 When forth advanc'd the gilded chaise.
 The village crowded round to gaze.
 The pert postilion, now promoted
 From driving plough, and neatly booted,
 His jacket, cap, and baldric on,
 (As greater folks than he have done)
 Look'd round ; and, with a coxcomb air,
 Smack'd loud his lash. The happy pair
 Bow'd graceful, from a sep'rate door,
 And Jenny, from the stool before.
 Roll swift, ye wheels ! to willing eyes
 New objects ev'ry moment rife.
 Each carriage passing on the road,
 From the broad waggon's pond'rous load

To the light car, where mounted high
 The giddy driver seems to fly,
 Were themes for harmless satire fit,
 And gave fresh force to Jenny's wit.
 Whate'er occur'd, 'twas all delightful,
 No noise was harsh, no danger frightful.
 The dash and splash thro' thick and thin,
 The hair-breadth scapes, the bustling inn,
 (Where well-bred landlords were so ready
 To welcome in the squire and lady.)
 Dirt, dust, and sun, they bore with ease,
 Determin'd to be pleas'd, and please.

Now nearer Town and all agog
 They know dear London by it's fog.
 Bridges they cross, thro' lanes they wind,
 Leave Hounflow's dang'rous heath behind,
 Thro' Brentford win a passage free
 By roaring, Wilkes and Liberty !

At

At Knightsbridge bles^s the short'ning way,
 (Where Bays's troops in ambush lay)
 O'er Piccadilly's pavement glide,
 (With palaces to grace it's side)
 'Till Bond-street with it's lamps a-blaze
 Concludes the journey of three days.

Why should we paint, in tedious song,
 How ev'ry day, and all day long,
 They drove at first with curious haste
 Thro' Lud's vast town ; or, as they pass'd
 Midst risings, fallings, and repairs
 Of streets on streets, and squares on squares,
 Describe how strong their wonder grew
 At buildings -- and at builders too.

Scarce less astonishment arose
 At architects more fair than those—
 Who built as high, as widely spread
 Th' enormous loads that cloath'd their head.

For

For British dames new follies love,
 And, if they can't invent, improve.
 Some with erect Pagodas vie,
 Some nod, like Pisa's tow'r, awry,
 Medusa's snakes, with Pallas' crest,
 Convolv'd, contorted, and compres'd ;
 With intermingling trees, and flow'rs,
 And corn, and grafs, and shepherds' bow'rs,
 Stage above stage the turrets run,
 Like pendent groves of Babylon,
 'Till nodding from the topmost wall
 Otranto's plumes envelop all !
 Whilst the black ewes, who own'd the hair,
 Feed harmless on, in pastures fair,
 Unconscious that *their* tails perfume,
 In scented curls, the Drawing-room.
 When Night her murky pinions spread,
 And sober folks retir'd to bed,

To ev'ry public place they flew,
Where Jenny told them who was who.

Money was always at command,
And tripp'd with Pleasure hand in hand.
Money was equipage, was show,
Gallini's, Almack's, and Soho ;
The *passe par tout* thro' ev'ry vein
Of Dissipation's hydra reign.

O London, thou prolific source,
Parent of Vice, and Folly's nurse!
Fruitful as Nile thy copious springs
Spawn hourly births,—and all with stings :
But happiest far the He, or She,
I know not which, that livelier dunce
Who first contriv'd the Coterie,
To crush domestic bliss at once.

Then grinn'd, no doubt, amidst the dames,
As Nero fiddled to the flames.

Of

Of thee, Pantheon, let me speak
 With rev'rence, tho' in numbers weak ;
 Thy beauties Satire's frown beguile,
 We spare the follies for the pile.
 Flounc'd, furbelow'd, and trick'd for show,
 With lamps above, and lamps below,
 Thy charms even modern taste defy'd,
 They could not spoil thee, tho' they try'd.

Ah pity that Time's hasty wings
 Must sweep thee off with vulgar things !
 Let architects of humbler name
 On *frail* materials build their fame,
 Their noblest works the world might want—
 WYATT should build in adamant.

But what are these to scenes which lie
 Secreted from the vulgar eye,
 And baffle all the pow'rs of song ?—
 A brazen throat, an iron tongue

(Which poets wish for, when at length
 Their subject soars above their strength)
 Would shun the task. Our humbler Muse,
 (Who only reads the public news,
 And idly utters what she gleans
 From chronicles and magazines)
 Recoiling feels her feeble fires,
 And blushing to her shades retires.
 Alas! she knows not how to treat
 The finer follies of the Great,
 Where ev'n, Democritus, thy sneer
 Were vain, as Heraclitus' tear.
 Suffice it that by just degrees
 They reach'd all heighths, and rose with ease ;
 (For Beauty wins it's way, uncall'd,
 And ready dupes are ne'er black-ball'd.)
 Each gambling Dame She knew, and He
 Knew ev'ry Shark of Quality ;

From the grave, cautious few, who live
 On thoughtless Youth, and living thrive,
 To the light Train who mimic France,
 And the soft Sons of Nonchalance.

While Jenny, now no more of use,
 Excuse succeeding to excuse,
 Grew piqu'd, and prudently withdrew
 To shilling Whist, and chicken Lu.

Advanc'd to Fashion's wav'ring head,
 They now, where once they follow'd, led.
 Devis'd new systems of delight,
 A-bed all day, and up all night,
 In diff'rent circles reign'd supreme,
 Wives copied her, and Husbands him ;
 Till so *divinely* Life ran on,
 So separate, so quite *bon ton*,
 That meeting in a public place
 They scarcely knew each other's face.

At last they met, by *bis* desire,
A-tête-à-tête across the fire ;
 Look'd in each other's face a-while
 With half a tear, and half a smile.
 The ruddy health, which wont to grace
 With manly glow his rural face,
 Now scarce retain'd it's faintest streak ;
 So fallow was his leathern cheek.
 She lank, and pale, and hollow-ey'd,
 With *rouge* had striven in vain to hide
 What once was beauty, and repair
 The rapine of the midnight air.

Silence is eloquence, 'tis said.
 Both wish'd to speak, both hung the head.
 At length it burst.—“ 'Tis time,” he cries,
 “ When tir'd of folly, to be wife.
 “ Are you too tir'd ?”—then check'd a groan.
 She wept consent, and he went on.

“ How delicate the married life !
“ You love your husband, I my wife.
“ Not ev'n satiety could tame,
“ Nor dissipation quench the flame.
“ True to the bias of our kind
“ 'Tis happiness we wish to find.
“ In rural scenes retir'd we sought
“ In vain the dear delicious draught.
“ Tho' blest with Love's indulgent store,
“ We found we wanted something more.
“ 'Twas company, 'twas friends to share
“ The bliss we languish'd to declare.
“ 'Twas social converse, change of scene,
“ To soothe the sullen hour of spleen ;
“ Short absences to wake desire,
“ And sweet regrets to fan the fire.
“ We left the lonesome place ; and found,
“ In Dissipation's giddy round,
“ A thou-

“ A thousand novelties to wake
“ The springs of life and not to break.
“ As, from the nest not wand’ring far,
“ In light excursions thro’ the air,
“ The feather’d tenants of the grove
“ Around in mazy circles move,
“ (Sip the cool springs that murmur’ring flow,
“ Or taste the blossom on the bough.)
“ We sported freely with the rest;
“ And, still returning to the nest,
“ In easy mirth we chatted o’er
“ The trifles of the day before.
“ Behold us now, dissolving quite
“ In the full ocean of delight ;
“ In pleasures ev’ry hour employ,
“ Immers’d in all the world calls joy.
“ Our affluence easing the expence
“ Of splendour, and magnificence.

“ Our

“ Our company, th’ exalted fet
 “ Of all that’s gay, and all that’s great :
 “ Nor happy yet !—and where’s the wonder ?—
 “ WE LIVE, MY DEAR, TOO MUCH ASUNDER.”

The moral of my Tale is this,
 Variety’s the soul of blis.
 But such Variety alone
 As makes our home the more our own.
 As from the heart’s impelling pow’r
 The life-blood pours it’s genial store ;
 Tho’, taking each a various way,
 The active streams meandering play
 Thro’ ev’ry artery, ev’ry vein,
 All to the heart return again ;
 From thence resume their new career,
 But still return, and center there :

So

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